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# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

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Testimony presented to the Environment Committee of the Connecticut General  
Assembly by Connecticut Commissioner of Agriculture F. Philip Prelli

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Good morning Chairman Meyer, Chairman Roy, Ranking Members McKinney,  
Chapin and members of the Committee.

My name is Phil Prelli and I serve as Connecticut's Commissioner of Agriculture. I  
am confining my remarks to the Department's bills that your Committee graciously  
raised in concept. I will be happy to answer any questions that the Committee has  
regarding our proposed legislation.

The Department has asked for consideration on four proposed bills:

**5117 AAC CONSERVATION AND PRESERVATION RESTRICTIONS HELD BY  
THE STATE,**

**5118 AAC CERTIFICATES OF ORIGIN FOR DOGS SOLD BY PET SHOP  
LICENSEES,**

**5129 AAC MINOR REVISIONS TO THE POULTRY LICENSING AND FARM  
WINE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL STATUTES, and**

**5131 AAC VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY  
AQUACULTURE CENTER SHELLFISH BEDS.**

With respect to the first proposed bill, R. B. 5117, AAC CONSERVATION AND  
PRESERVATION RESTRICTIONS HELD BY THE STATE the Department has  
been concerned for sometime by encroachments upon preserved agricultural land.  
Occasionally, permits are issued by local land use boards that improperly impact  
land that the taxpayers have paid to preserve. Specifically, the proposed bill:

A. Allows that the holder of a restriction, conservation or preservation, other than  
the state, may provide proof to the entity granting the permit, that the application  
will violate the terms of the restriction and consequently the permit will not be  
granted.

B. Allows that when the state holds the restriction, the commissioner responsible shall notify the entity considering the permit that the application will violate the terms of the restriction and consequently the permit will not be granted.

C. States that if the permit applicant fails to comply, any party holding the restriction may file an appeal to the entity granting the permit, subject to the rules of the permit granting authority. The permitting entity, upon finding that the requested land use violates the terms of the restriction, shall reverse the permit approval.

D. Allows that when the State of Connecticut holds the restriction, an appeal may be filed with the Commissioner holding the restriction. Upon finding that the requested land use violates the terms of the restriction, he or she shall notify the permitting authority that shall immediately reverse the permit approval.

E. States that the commissioner may impose civil penalties, at his or her discretion, not to exceed \$5,000 per violation and not to exceed \$1,000 per day during which the violation continues after receipt of a final order of the commissioner.

The second proposed bill that the Department is asking consideration of, R. B. 5118, AAC CERTIFICATES OF ORIGIN FOR DOGS SOLD BY PET SHOP LICESEES seeks to remove the requirement that "certificates of origin" be forwarded to the Department from the pet shop selling the dog. In lieu of sending "certificates of origin" to the Department the proposed bill requires an electronic or paper copy to be kept on file for one year at the business location where the dog was purchased. On the day this testimony was written the Department received 72 certificates of origin from 5 pet shops. There are currently 128 licensed pet shops. Enactment of this proposed legislation will reduce onerous and unnecessary expenses on small businesses and the Connecticut Department of Agriculture. State Animal Control officers will audit the "certificates of origin" during routine inspections, which we expect will ensure compliance with the Legislature's intent of requiring pet shops to import only from USDA licensed facilities.

The third bill that we are asking be considered, R. B. 5129, AAC MINOR REVISIONS TO THE POULTRY LICENSING AND FARM WINE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL STATUTES are house cleaning measures. This proposed legislation clarifies those producers who own poultry that produce eggs for human consumption are exempt from poultry dealer licensing requirements. The bill also changes the licensing time frame from the present July/June to January/December, which will better conform to agency work loads and equipment. The proposal also removes a section dealing with succession on the Farm Wine Development Council that was inadvertently included in the bill during the last legislative session. The removal of this section will clarify the appointment process.

Lastly, R. B. 5131, AAC VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AQUACULTURE CENTER SHELLFISH BEDS pertains to the renovated Bridgeport Aquaculture Center, which will have an aquaculture hatchery similar to the New Haven Vocational Aquaculture Center. The New Haven school has developed an educational curriculum based on the operation of the hatchery and upweller grow systems suspended from school piers. Upon completion of Bridgeport's expansion that program will similarly produce shellfish seed. Unfortunately, the near shore waters are only accepted for growing shellfish seed which must be transplanted to cleaner waters during grow out. Both schools have inquired about obtaining shell fish grounds in a cleaner water classification. Presently, statute does not provide for a mechanism to allow for that as shellfish leases are awarded to the highest bidder. This proposed change would allow the Commissioner of Agriculture to grant unfarmed shellfish grounds for educational purposes to the Aquaculture schools.

Thank you for the opportunity to present our Department's testimony on our proposed legislation. I'm happy to entertain any of your questions at this time.